Below: **The high mountains of Colorado frame this Santa Fe caboose as it passes the power plant departing Winter Park.**

GARY HANKINS
MMR 493

I feel that most of us have a great time doing what we all enjoy — running trains and chatting with each other. Some crew members have staked their claim on certain jobs that they like, and we enjoy having them do what they prefer. Some just want to run over the road; others prefer switching. It is nice that we do offer a variety of jobs and a relaxed atmosphere during sessions. We are all here to have a good time. There is seldom a session where someone does not get a good ribbing about something.

Having a nearly finished layout has many rewards. Because I am able to host 15 people for an operating session, I have gotten to know many other area modelers and have made many good friends. It is such a pleasure to get to visit with other modelers and explain techniques and ideas that we had on our railroad during open houses and when the railroad is on tour for train meets. Hearing comments by people who have never experienced a completed model railroad is also a blast. Some have no idea what can be accomplished in the hobby. It is so satisfying to hear someone say, "This is what I want to do," whether it is the whole railroad or a certain feature on the model. Open houses allow us to meet new people and include them in our operations.

Finally, I more than likely would have never been able to complete the Achievement Program and receive my Master Model Railroader certificate if we hadn't built this layout. The railroad was large enough to allow me to complete most certificates without having to do too much additional work. I received a lot of guidance and friendly advice and suggestions thanks to all the modelers I met along the way. I owe a lot to Turkey Creek Division members and their association with the Achievement Program.

This layout has brought me so much joy and pleasure. I hope I have inspired you to build your dream railroad. While there may be superior layouts or larger ones around, none can bring me more satisfaction than the one my family and I built together.

Below: **Layout owner, Gary Hankins, MMR.**